

# Kiribati (a.k.a. Gilbertese)

## Helps for Reading Vital Records

Alan Marchant, 29 January 2021

### Alphabet

- Kiribati uses only the following letters. All other letters are rare before the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, except in foreign names.

A B E I K M N NG O R T U W

- The letter T is very common, especially at the beginning of names. The uppercase cursive T can sometimes be confused with the unlikely P or S. Lower-case t is often written with the cross-bar shifted right, detached from the vertical stroke.
- Lower-case g is the only letter with a down-stroke. It exists only in the combination ng (equivalent to ñ).
- The cursive lower-case n and u are about equally common and are not easily distinguished; lower-case n and r are more distinguishable.

### Months

English and Kiribati forms may exist in the same document.

January	Tianuari	July	Turai
February	Beberuare	August	Aokati
March	Mati	September	Tebetembwa
April	Eberi	October	Okitobwa
May	Mei	November	Nobembwa
June	Tun	December	Ritembwa

### Terminology

Kiribati words can have many alternate meanings. This list identifies usages encountered in the headings of vital records.

aba makoro	island	ma	and
abana	resident	maiu	life
aika	of, who	makuri	occupation
aine	female	mane, mwane	male
akea	none (n.b. not a name)	mare	married

aki	not	mate	dead
ana	her, his	matena	death
ao	and, with	mwenga	home
araia	list	na.	item number
aran	name	namwakina	month
are	that	natin	children
atei	children	nei, ne, N	female title
auti	home	ngkana, ñkana	when
boki	book	ni	of
bongina	date	o n aoraki	hospital
buki	cause	raure	divorced
bun, buna	spouse	ririki	year, age
bung	birth	tabo	place
buniaki	born	tai	date
e	he, she	taman	father
iai	was, did	te	article (a, an, the)
iein	married	tei	child
I-Kiribati	native islander	ten, te, T	male title
I-Matang	foreigner	tenua	three
karerei	authorization	teuana	one
karo	parent	tinan	mother
kawa	town	tuai	not yet
ke	or	ua, uoua	two
korobokian	register		

## Names

- Strings of vowels (3 or more) are common.
- Names frequently include repeated syllables, e.g. *bwebwe* or *teitei*.
- In foreign-inspired names where a J might be expected, Kiribati uses I or T.
- In foreign-inspired names where an L might be expected, Kiribati uses R.
- Prefixes, esp. Te, may run into the given name; watch for a capital letter following Te to start the actual name.
- Before the late 20<sup>th</sup> century only a given name is typically given. Later, a patronymic (father's given name) is often added.
- Watch for apostrophes placed between letters within names.

## Places

<u>island groups</u>	<u>islands</u>	<u>major villages, towns, and places</u>			
Gilbert Islands	Abaiang, a.k.a. Apia or Charlotte Is.				
		Aoneaba	Aonobuaka	Borotiam	Ewena
		Koinawa	Morikao	Ouba	Nuotaea
		Ribono	Tabontebike	Taburao	Tabwiroa
		Takarano	Tanimaiaiki	Tebero	
		Tebunginako	Tebwanga	Teirio	
		Teiro	Tuarabu	Ubanteman	
	Abemama				
		Abatiku	Bangotante- kabaia	Baretoa	Biike
		Binoinano			
		Kabangaki	Kariatebike	Kauma	Kenna
		Manoku	Tabiang	Tabontebike	
		Tanimainiku	Tebanga	Tekatirirake	
	Aranuka				
		Buariki	Buarua	Kauake	Takaeang
	Arorae				
		Tamaroa	Roreti	Taribo	
	Beru				
		Nuka	Rororongu	Tabiang	Tabukinberu
	Butaritari, a.k.a. Makin				
		Antekana	Bikatieta	Bikaati	Keuea
		Kuuma	Makin	Onomaru	
		Tabonuea	Tanimainiku	Taritari	
		Taubukin- meang	Temano- kunuea	Tikurere	
	Kuria				
		Bouatoa	Buariki	Marenaua	
		Norauea	Oneeke	Tabontebike	
	Maiana				
		Aobike	Bubutei	Raweai	Tebanga
		Tebiauea	Tebikera	Tebwangaua	Tebwangetua
		Teitai	Tekaranga	Tematan- tongo	Toora
	Marakei				
		Antai	Baretoa	Buota	Bwainuna
	Norauea	Raweta	Rawannawi		
	Teititi	Temotu	Tekarakan		

<u>island groups</u>	<u>islands</u>	<u>major villages, towns, and places</u>			
	Nikunau	Tekuanga	Teraereke	Terokea	
		Bukerua Rungata	Muribenua Tabomatang	Mwanriiki Tabutoa	Nikumanu
	Nonouti	Abamakoro Noumatang Temanoku	Autukia Rotuma Temotu	Benuaroa Taboiaki Teuabu	Matang
	Onotoa	Aiaki Tanaeang	Buariki Tekawa	Otoae Temao	Tabuarorae
	Tabiteuea (Meang / Maiaki, North / South)				
		Aanikai	Aiwa	Aranuka	Bangai
		Buariki	Buatua	Buota	Eita
		Kabuna	Katabanga	Nautia	Nikutiri
		Noutuoru	Taku	Tanaatoorua	Tanaeang
		Tauma	Taungaeaka	Tebaukie	Tebouria
		Tekabwibwi	Tekaman	Tekuku	
		Tenatorua	Tengabuka	Terikiai	
		Tewai	Utiroa	Unitia	
	Tamana	Arabungea	Bakaka	Bakarawa	Barebuka
	Tarawa (North / South)				
		Abaokoro	Abatao	Ambo	Bairiki
		Betio	Bonriki	Buariki	Buota
		Eutan	Marenanuka	Nawerewere	Taborio
		Tanaea	Teinainano	Temwaiku	Tetabuki
Phoenix Islands					
	Abariringa, a.k.a. Canton Island				
	Tebaronga				
	Birnie Island				
	Enderbury Island				
	Manra, a.k.a. Sydney Island				
	McKean Island				
	Nikumaroro, a.k.a. Gardner Island				
	Arundel plantation				
	Orono, a.k.a. Hull Island				
	Arariki				
	Rawaki, a.k.a. Phoenix Island				
Line Islands					
	Caroline Island, a.k.a. Millennium Is.				
		Long Is.	Nake Is.	South Is.	
	Flint Island				
	Kiritimati, a.k.a. Christmas Island				

<u>island groups</u>	<u>islands</u>	<u>major villages, towns, and places</u>			
		Banana	Benson Pt.	Cook Is.	
		Levers Plantation		Londres or London	
		Paris	Poland	Tabwakea	
	Malden Island				
	Starbuck Island				
	Tabuaeran, a.k.a. Fanning Island				
		Aontenaa	Aramari	Betania	Eten
		Mwanuku	Napari	Paelau	
		Tereitaki	Tereitannano	Terine	
	Teraina, a.k.a. Washington Island				
		Abaiang	Arabata	Kaaitara	Kaua- mwemwe
		Matanibike	Mwakeitari	Onauea	
		Tangkore	Uteute		
	Vostok Island				
other	Banaba, a.k.a. Ocean Island				
		Antereen	Aonoanne	Buakonikai	
		Tabiang	Tabwewa	Uma	

The these place names were identified from Wikipedia entries and similar internet sites. There is unfortunately no formal gazetteer for Kiribati. For the most part, the names are phonetic transcriptions from the local idiom; therefore minor spelling variations are common.

Civil districts in Kiribati typically are named for a major island and include several neighboring islands. Also, it is not uncommon for district records to include some events from distant locations.